

**MINUTES OF THE
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION OF DEPARTMENTS,
COMMITTEES AND THE NUMBER OF SUPERVISORY DISTRICTS FOR
ONEIDA COUNTY MEETING
October 7, 2010**

Members Present: Chairman David Hintz; John Young; Denny Thompson; and Tom Rudolph.

Members Excused: Carol Pederson.

Others Present: Peter Wolk, District #18 Supervisor; Richard Moore, *The Lakeland Times/Daily News*; John Potters, County Coordinator; and LuAnn Brunette, Buildings & Grounds Leadperson/Committee Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hintz called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. in Committee Room #2 of the Oneida County Courthouse. He noted that the meeting notice had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and accommodations would be made for qualified individuals pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. He further noted Supervisor Carol Pederson was excused from today's meeting.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda at the chair's discretion by Rudolph/Young. All aye on voice vote.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2010 meeting by Thompson/Young. Chairman Hintz noted one correction on page 4 ("listserv" should be spelled "listserve"). All aye on voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment.

**NUMBER OF COUNTY BOARD SUPERVISORS and DISCUSS
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR REDUCTION OF
COUNTY BOARD TO 19 MEMBERS**

Supervisor Rudolph discussed the charge of this committee and that of the redistricting committee. He suggested a joint meeting between the two committees might be beneficial.

Supervisor Young discussed the charge of the committee and the idea of a joint meeting with the redistricting committee. He stated that he has no jurisdiction over that committee.

Supervisor Thompson stated he had discussion with members of the redistricting committee, and related that it was their consensus that it was important to demonstrate that the county board is looking at themselves first. He continued that the number nineteen is a compromise number. He stated that he personally saw no problem with this.

Supervisor Rudolph stated that he didn't have a problem with the number, but the committee should be basing decisions on factual data or information, not on an arbitrary number that looks like it may be good. He questioned the basis for this particular number.

Chairman Hintz responded that it is within the charge of this committee to come up with a number of supervisors. He stated that he would welcome the thoughts of the redistricting committee on the appropriate number of supervisors, noting that two members of the redistricting committee were present at this meeting. Hintz asked Supervisor Wolk for background on the basis of the figure of nineteen, and then Supervisor Young for his perspective.

Wolk responded that Supervisor Thompson was correct, it was the feeling of the redistricting committee that before we ask others to give something up, we should give up ourselves. He stated that he thought if remaining with twenty-one supervisors was brought before the full county board, it would be defeated. Wolk stated that in discussion, the figure of nineteen came up; it seemed to be an acceptable figure, one that county board members would go along with.

Supervisor Young pointed out that while some may take issue with having to work on the specified charge of the committee within a specific timeframe, the redistricting process is mandated within a timeframe. He stated that the number of supervisors must be known in order to redistrict; the redistricting committee cannot redistrict for multiple scenarios. Young stated the redistricting committee felt that if the county doesn't make the changes, the public would. He indicated the change could only be made once every ten years.

Chairman Hintz noted that a reduction in the number of supervisors would demonstrate that the board is serious about the proposed changes.

Supervisor Young explained the committee's theory was to reduce by two the number of supervisors, which would keep the total number uneven.

Chairman Hintz agreed an odd number was appropriate. He related that he asked Supervisor Pederson for her opinion, and she asked that he express on her behalf that she felt seventeen was the right number of supervisors, noting Pederson gave no basis for that figure. Hintz asked if anyone had a specific number in mind.

Supervisor Thompson reiterated that the committee needs to reduce, but doesn't have to chop the number totally, as there is no data to indicate less supervisors would cut costs. He related more supervisors provides the possibility for more conservative spenders. Thompson stated that the reduction to nineteen is a start, not an overall chop, and indicated he felt comfortable with that number.

Supervisor Rudolph stated he had no particular problem with the number, but would have hoped in looking at other counties who have looked at this issue, some basis for the number would be identified. He stated that Oneida County is allowed thirty-one supervisors by statute, with the current number of twenty-one all ready ten below that level. Rudolph continued, stating that the committee has discussed and had been shown earlier, a reduction in the number of supervisors does not necessarily save the county money, and if a savings were experienced it would likely be insignificant in terms of the total budget. He further noted if the number is reduced drastically, it might be detrimental to the budget. Rudolph stated he agreed there should be an effort to reduce the number. He stated he had been hopeful the county coordinator could have obtained information from counties who have reduced their numbers and the results of that work. He reiterated that he had no particular issue with the figure of nineteen, but needs justification for going to that point. He stated that the figure seemed to be based on personal opinions not supported by factual data.

Potters responded that while he had placed "feelers" out to fifteen counties comparable in per capita income, population, demographics, etc., and who have done downsizing in the recent past, he apologized for not having responses from all those contacted. He stated he would compile the information as soon as he has received it, and will send this out to committee members, along with comments by those who have provided the information. Potters stated he felt part of the information should include input from supervisors from those counties as well as that of administrators or staff.

Rudolph questioned if information could be obtained from WCA.

Chairman Hintz related information about a session he attended that was presented by the county board chair from St. Croix County. He stated the presenter discussed information about four counties that had referenda on the number of supervisors, all of which passed to reduce the number of supervisors on their boards. He stated that the reduction in the number of supervisors created savings, but the real savings was created by the number of committees and the new organizational chart of committees. He felt that was where the efficiency was, in restructuring the number of committees and how these worked. Hintz explained that the reorganization created global perspectives and lessened micro-management, allowing for a gain in efficiency. He indicated that brought up the question of what we can eliminate from meetings to provide for a more global approach.

Supervisor Rudolph stated he wasn't able to attend that particular session, and questioned if the presenter had information on efficiency gained through combining departments.

Chairman Hintz discussed other presentations made at the conference that included overcoming budget constraints, and he indicated that he would reproduce handouts for this committee for later discussion.

Discussion followed on possible approaches, including holding a joint meeting with the redistricting committee, studying comparable counties' information, or taking a position at this point and supporting an appropriate number.

Thompson discussed how restructuring to a lower number of supervisors could concentrate too much power in a committee, and may not allow for reasonable dissention; whereas too many people on a committee might mean more committees and attending more meetings.

Discussion followed with regard to changes made in St. Croix County. Chairman Hintz referred to a chart from that county, discussed the size of the committees affected by the changes, and discussed St. Croix's Committee of the Whole, where no resolutions were passed, but contained the participation of the full county board operating at a committee level.

Then followed discussion on holding a joint meeting with the redistricting committee. Supervisor Rudolph felt it would be useful to ensure a cohesive approach. Supervisor Thompson was fine with that, noting that members of this committee could also discuss this individually with members of the redistricting committee or read their minutes. Supervisor Young indicated a joint committee is too late; the redistricting committee has made their decision. He further indicated he didn't think a joint meeting was necessary if the committee is satisfied with the number of nineteen.

Rudolph further discussed the need for information to support this recommendation.

Supervisor Thompson indicated that type of information is not available. **Motion by Thompson that this committee agrees with the recommendation of the redistricting committee and would recommend to the county board a reduction of supervisors from twenty-one to nineteen. Second by Young.** It was noted that two people of the seven-person committee were absent at the redistricting committee meeting the day the decision on the number of supervisors was made. Supervisor Rudolph discussed the need for a basis for this decision and the need for supporting information. Supervisor Thompson stated he respectfully disagreed, and referred to the most recent edition of the WCA magazine which indicated that counties will be in financial trouble in the next five years and cannot keep going status quo. He discussed the level of

government as non-sustainable, noting revenues will not be there. Supervisor Young discussed implications to other counties that are looking at eliminating positions. Supervisor Rudolph discussed the need to take into account economy and budget constraints, noting he would agree reductions will be necessary, but we should make these changes and decisions on factual information. Supervisor Young responded the number nineteen is a starting point, noting this still has to come to the full board, so there would be plenty of time to make adjustments. Discussion then focused on the need to have arrived at a figure prior to completion of redistricting, and that a formula could not be developed that would predict a number. Rudolph indicated that he could support this, as he is in favor in some type of reduction, noting his concern that decisions are based on factual information.

The wording of the motion was reviewed. Potters posed an alternative would be to reformat the motion to say we will support the recommendation of the redistricting committee to go to nineteen, or the option of further evaluation. Members discussed at length possible amendments to the motion. **Supervisor Thompson amended his motion to: This committee recommends to the county board the number of nineteen supervisors, a reduction from twenty-one supervisors.** Young concurred with the change. Rudolph discussed the committee form of government and the charge of this committee. Thompson stated that he researched this and cannot find any type of data to substantiate a formula for determining this number. Discussion followed. Chairman Hintz called for a roll call vote: all supervisors indicated aye, motion carried.

COMMITTEE/SUPERVISORS/DEPARTMENTS TEAMS UPDATE

Young stated he and Pederson talked, but due to Pederson's vacation, have not been able to meet to discuss their ideas.

Rudolph stated that this committee can watch in the near future how combining land and water and UW extension is working, noting how these departments merged could be used as a model for other possible merges and consolidations. He further noted there could be an impact on the duration of committee meetings as a result of the merge. He stated that he met yesterday with the two department heads and worked to streamline the agenda, as previously each committee had a two-hour meeting.

Chairman Hintz stated that the county coordinator is preparing a matrix on the committee meetings, including their duration, the frequency of meetings, etc.

Supervisor Young noted part of the problem is that the committee of jurisdiction sets policy on particular departments, and in instances micro-management is the problem that draws out the length of the committee meetings.

Hintz discussed the need for efficiency.

Supervisor Young stated the department heads do a great job, they should have more of a managing aspect; committees should set policy and ensure policies are followed.

Supervisor Rudolph discussed a change of the overall committee structure to approach issues more globally on a committee level.

Supervisor Thompson related there seemed to have been concern among department heads and employees with regard to this committee and its charge. He discussed the possible use of department heads and their possible assistance or input to develop a plan for merging, rather than arbitrary merges.

Supervisor Young discussed the need for staff input.

Chairman Hintz discussed the challenges of combining departments as the most difficult task of this committee.

Potters related he has been doing research on approaches to departmental consolidation, noting this committee could achieve it without input from others, with input, or a consultant could be hired for input.

Chairman Hintz discussed the enormity of this charge, noting this task is too great to accomplish by a couple of supervisors working several hours a week within a limited timeframe. He stated that this could not be done by the middle of January, but the committee can make progress. He discussed the need for the committee to develop a process of how to achieve this, noting that would be a major accomplishment.

Potters stated that WCA was beneficial to talk with companies who have come up with ideas for reorganization of departments and efficiency within existing departments. He related that one of the outcomes or suggestions he received was the need to visit some of the other counties who have gone through a serious department merging. His suggestion was that he visit some counties that have gone through this in a significant fashion, to determine barriers, successes, how was it done, possible outside sources, internal processes, and he also suggested that he and key department heads look at this internally, without an outside consultant. He discussed the cost of hiring an outside consultant, history on the cost of the recent study for the Human Service Center, and the size of the county government versus that group. He suggested that the committee might perform the majority of the study internally, and then use an outside source for efficiencies. Discussion followed on the possible inclusion of department heads to accompany Potters on his out-of-county visits.

Potters pointed out that there is a greater cost with sending an entire team, but he would be willing to do either approach.

Discussion followed on selection criteria for the counties to be visited. The committee members discussed their expectation that upon his visits to other counties, Potters would return with a recommendation on how this county should proceed. Potters related that he has had conversations with the Marinette County administrator, and he felt it would be beneficial to have a meeting with the administrator and committee members or department heads who have been involved with this.

Supervisor Rudolph stated that an individual who is retired from Marathon County, who was involved with major mergers of departments there, has volunteered to assist the county with his input. He stated that this would be at no cost. He questioned if he should invite him to a meeting.

Chairman Hintz stated at a minimum this could be included in a reorganization approach, and could provide valuable input. He indicated that Potters should also visit with the Marinette County administrator and make a recommendation as to if he should be invited to a future meeting.

Motion by Young/Rudolph to instruct Potters to proceed with visiting counties who have gone through the consolidation process and report back to this committee. All aye on voice vote.

Discussion followed with regard to the number of changes to be anticipated in the immediate future and opportunities for consolidation through attrition.

Supervisor Thompson discussed possible cost savings through cost avoidance, limit employee expansion, limit programs, provide cross training of employees, limit expansion, and possible cooperative agreements with the city or other counties.

Committee members discussed past cooperative efforts with other counties, which allowed for less duplication.

Chairman Hintz offered that the people who work for the county probably have ideas for money savings; he discussed the need to open channels of communication to obtain those ideas. He suggested a cost/benefit analysis of programs, which might eliminate some costly services or programs.

Potters provided a list of services and associated costs he developed from the county's DID document. He pointed out that the list is a 15-page summary of a 325-page list, noting that the cost may not be on tax levy, as whether grant funding is used or programs are mandated would be available in the full DID, but not in the summary. He stated the DID is online and has been disbursed at meetings on CD's, etc.

Supervisor Young noted many committees have gone from two meetings a month to one meeting a month, and he complimented those efforts.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The timetable needed for Potters to meet with other county officials was discussed. Discussion followed on when to bring this committee's recommendation on the number of supervisors to the county board, and it was determined this should be provided at the November meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 1, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

Chairman Hintz stated that he would contact Gary Baier, Redistricting Committee Chairman and discuss having the resolution prepared and ready for this committee's signature on November 1st.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items were identified as: resolution for recommendation on reduction in number of supervisors, update from Potters on approach for consolidation, and other items as they arise.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned by a motion of Rudolph/Thompson. The time was 11:05 a.m. All aye on voice vote.

David Hintz,
Chairman

LuAnn Brunette,
Committee Secretary